

ETHNOGRAPHY OF TZELTAL COMMUNITIES

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The Indians manufacture and consume *chicha*, an alcoholic beverage fermented from sugar cane or maize. They drink larger quantities of rum prepared in Ladino-owned distilleries. *Pilico*, a combination of lime and tobacco, is chewed frequently, especially in Oxchuc, Tenejapa, and Cancuc.

Tenejapa is the only Tzeltal town that enjoys importance as a market center. Here a market is held every Sunday.

Pottery is made for sale outside the local community in Amatenango and in Tenango. In almost all the other communities the industry is practised in a rudimentary form merely to supply local needs. Blom and LaFarge observed and reported the techniques of pottery manufacture at Sivaca; "Villa limits his data to mentioning the industry there. Blom and LaFarge report, on hearsay, the method of making large, egg-shaped, three-handled water jars at Tenango; Villa observed and reported this industry. The former authors report that the clay used is "a light greenish brown colour." " Villa says that two kinds of clay, "white earth" and "red earth," are combined to form the paste. Villa also noted the tempering with a ground sandy limestone (*hi*); and the painting with a paint made from a soft stone from the river (*huxu-tsak*). The pots and griddles are made from one kind of clay tempered with a different sandstone called *bax*. The method of firing described for Sivaca by Blom and LaFarge from hearsay, involving the preparation of "an A-roof, forming a long tunnel," " was observed and photographed by Villa in Tenango. Villa was told that vessels after firing are filled with *posole* in water to reduce the porosity.

In Tenejapa metates are made for export, and in Oxchuc halters, lead-ropes, nets, and bags. The methods of weaving, net making and basketry, reported by Blom and LaFarge for Bachajón were not reported by Villa.

The type of habitation is the same throughout the whole region, although there are small variations from village to village. The houses are rectangular in form with four-sided roofs, thatched with grass, and with sides made of poles and clay. Only the houses of Chanal form an exception. The walls of these structures are in most cases of wood. The houses of Tenango present another exception in that they are the only ones where the roofs do not terminate in a ridge, but in a point, it is usual to cover this with an inverted pot. Houses are throughout divided into two rooms, one of which serves as living room and kitchen and the other as sleeping room. In some cases the kitchen is placed in the latter section. There is a single door in front; only in certain settlements to the north, as Chilón and Yajalon, where the influence of the white man has been greater, are houses to be seen with two doors and even some with small windows. The floor is always of packed earth.

The furnishings of the living room are limited in general to beds, improvised of boards placed on the ground or on logs, and covered with mats. The hammock is little used; it is generally reserved for children. The furnishings and domestic

¹⁹ Blom and LaFarge, 1927, 2: 342-345.
²⁰ *Ibid.*, 2: 183.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 2: 144.
²² *Ibid.*, 2: 345-349.

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[438]

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286342
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[197]

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778 natural elements (hail, wind, storms),
821 which often threaten and destroy the corn-
823 fields.

Distribution of Huts

621 In the parajes as well as in the centers
the tendency to cluster huts in patrilineal
nuclei is strong. One perceives this tendency
also where lineage or clan ties still persist
(Oxchuc).

[594] The majority of households consist of
the elementary family, a couple and their
offspring. The habitations include a hut,
which serves as dormitory and kitchen, plus
chickencoop, pigpen, and, sometimes, the
temascal (pus) used for steam baths.

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[417] Among industrious families another, small
343 hut serves exclusively as a kitchen. Seldom
417 does a fence separate this nucleus from its
neighbors, but it may protect a vegetable
patch from animals. In the capital, however,
each family must fence its lot.

Relationships between Communities

628 Communities establish commercial and
other ties according to their ecological dis-
tribution and cultural condition. In the
southern zone, Amatenango and Aguacate-
nango form a kind of unit, based on phys-
ical proximity and cultural affinity. Their
residents meet frequently at the Sunday
market of Teopisca. In the central zone,
Oxchuc, Tenejapa, Cancuc, and Tenango,
which more or less share ways of life and
natural environment, form another informal
association, contacts resulting from the
weekly markets of Tenejapa and Yochib. In
the northern zone, Sitala and Guaquitepec
form another unit. Ócosingo, Chilon, and
Yajalon are centers of commercial and po-
litical importance, occupied largely by La-
dinos but used as trade centers by Indians
throughout the northern zone.

412 TECHNOLOGY

Tools and Techniques

Farming tools are the most important: axe

[P 205-B]

Handcrafts

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[462] Among the few handcrafts practiced in the Tzeltal areas, ceramics, produced mainly by women, is the most widespread. Tenango and Amatenango del Valle are the only communities which have made a specialty of this craft. Tenango exports its products through the northern zone, Amatenango through the southern zone, including neighboring Guatemalan villages. Both places use a similar ceramic technique but different shape and ornamentation. Referring to Amatenango del Valle, Blom and LaFarge (1926-27, 2:396) state:

The pottery, which is their chief product, is almost all of one shape; a sphere, with three handles and a narrow bottle-neck with a flat lip. The decoration does not vary. Both shape and design, however, are of considerable charm. The polish is fine and smooth, giving an even golden-red colour all over, with the decoration in a deep, reddish brown. No such fine, finished work is done by other tribes in the area. The pots are baked by placing them on a rectangle of boards, two or more meters square, around a hot fire. The woman in charge turns them until they are done. These pots are carried by the men as far as San Cristóbal, where they are redistributed, and to Nentón in Guatemala.

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[438] Another widespread craft is spinning and weaving of fabrics for clothing. No village in the Tzeltal area trades these products because production barely meets their family needs. The backstrap loom of pre-Hispanic origin is the chief tool.

[184] Pita articles—ropes, bags, and nets to gather the harvest or carry loads—are mainly produced in Oxchuc and Cancuc.
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184 In Cancuc wooden combs are also manufactured.

• 342 *Houses and Furniture*

[354] Houses, from 3 to 5 m. on a side, are predominantly square with thatched roofs. The walls are wattle-and-daub or plain tree trunks tied with vines. Floors are of hardened earth. The houses only have one door and no windows, except in some vil-
[P. 207-A]

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[354]
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lages of the lowlands where the houses have small windows, which improve ventilation and illumination slightly. In places like Chanal, where there is abundant lumber, the sides of the houses are built with wooden boards set vertically. The largest and best-built houses are in Tenejapa center.

Generally, the hut is divided into two rooms: the front is parlor and kitchen, the rear is bedroom. In Bachajon the rear room serves as bedroom and kitchen, the front room for sewing and grinding and the reception of visitors. In Amatenango del Valle the front of the house is open and [574] used as a porch for visits. Ceramic work [323] is also performed here. In one room of the [251] house a bin of wood or reeds stores corn. [343] Sometimes, small structures which serve as granaries are built inside the hut.

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Among the auxiliary structures outside is the temascal (*pus*) used for steam baths. Not every hut has a *pus* since one is enough to attend the needs of several neighboring families. The *pus* is a small room 1.5 m. high by 2 m. on each side, built of stones and clay. The roof is flat. Inside a hollow forms a hearth for heating stones. Water thrown on these red-hot stones produces the necessary steam. On the floor are boards on which people lie while taking the bath. [184] Among the Tzeltal and Tzotzil the *pus* is [757] not only for cleanliness but also for the cure [846] of certain diseases and to strengthen women after childbirth. Sweat baths are more commonly taken in Tierra Fria than in Tierra Caliente.

417 The other structures near the hut are the chicken coop and the hogpen.

352 Furniture is limited to essential items. In the kitchen are the three hearth stones, the comal (*samet*), the grinding stone (*chá*), a bench or strong table to hold the metate (*ah-ken*), one or two small tables (*matz-malté* or *vebalté*) 25-39 cm. high and 30-40 cm. in diameter, and small benches 15-20 cm. high made of scooped-out tree trunks

415 (*tzanté*). Kitchen equipment includes earthenware (pans, pitchers, and jars) and [P. 207-B]

4: Villa Rojas E-4,5 (1938-1944) 1969 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

Tenejapa



FIG. 5.—TENEJAPA GROUP WITH VESSELS CONTAINING CHICHA. (Copyright, Gertrude Duby.)

[P. 214-A]

132 Change in soil is
134 probably the reason for change in vegetation. The tropical forest grows on black humus soil and the pine country is underlain by a red sandstone which weathers into a heavy red clay. The contact of this sandstone with the limestone country on which leaf trees grow lies about an hour's ride north of the village of Bachajon.

[133] The pine country is very hilly, the trees are scattered over a carpet of vivid green grass cut by the strong red line of the soil of the trail like a scar (fig. 195).

114 It was like riding through a magnificent park, up and down the hills and across small streams. Our poor animals had a hard time on the slippery trail. La Farge's horse gave out, and he had to change his saddle to a spare animal.

361 The Bachajon Indian village came in sight, lying on a hill in the
342 middle of the valley. It was well after noon when we reached the
346 dilapidated, grass-roofed and mud-walled huts clustered around the huge ruin of an old Spanish stone church. The Indians use a new church which they have built of the same material as their houses.

122 The house of the Government agent lies in the middle of the
344 village and here we were quartered in a room, the floor of which had just been covered with a carpet of fresh pine needles.

123 The Bachajon Indians are reputed to be unfriendly to all travelers, so we were not surprised when the Indian chief of the village told us that he could not furnish fodder for our animals or men to carry some of our cargo. To all our questions he answered "Mayuk," or in English, "Ain't got none." But when the chief, a little later, heard from our Encanto men that we had been friendly to them, and that furthermore, we were friends of the big father President in Mexico City, he changed his attitude.

648 The Government agent is sent to the Indian village by the civil
[651] authorities of the neighbouring Mexican town of Ocosingo. He is
[653] supposed to collect certain taxes, raise labourers for public works in the Mexican town, and help the Indians with their affairs. He is highly unpopular among the Indians, who counteract his orders through a remarkable system of passive resistance. They say "yes" to everything and do nothing. The only reason the Indians tolerate [293] him is because he keeps a small store and sells liquor. The Indian is very fond of sugar-cane rum, and every Saturday and Sunday all the villagers generally get drunk. The agent complained bitterly [123] that the Indians were not selling him any food supplies and was astonished when they sold us chickens and eggs.

361 Most of the Bachajon Indians live hidden away in the bush. Only the families of the chief and the village officials live around the old church ruins.

The country near the village has been farmed out long ago; now the fields lie at a distance in the jungle. After every concentration, the Indians drift away again like blown smoke. Today most of the houses are rotten, sagging, with gaping doors. The paths are grown up with weeds, huge, old moss-covered crosses lean at crazy angles by the main trails. Over all broods the frame of the sacked church, huge stone walls with rank vegetation around them, and a twisted, unhealthy oak-tree on one side, like a composition by Piranesi.

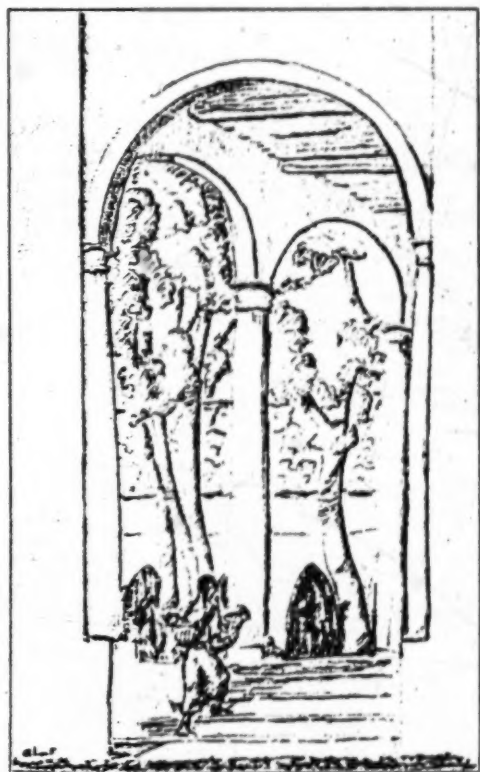


FIG. 277—Ocosingo, Chi. Colonnade on the Plaza.

Ocosingo Valley and its neighbours furnish a transition towards the real highlands. The valleys are fertile and green, ringed in with ranges of steep, rich hills. The soil in the lower parts is light; here palms and pines grow together, with a luxuriance of rich grass that makes an ideal grazing country. Through the valleys are large and small ranches of Ladinos and old Spanish families. The bigger ones, such as San Antonio, Quechil, and Achin in the Ocosingo Valley, San José Reforma and El Real beyond the San José Pass, and Tecojá in its own valley, each has a village of Indian labourers attached to them. The natives' houses are rather

better than the average, and often tile-roofed (fig. 278). The Indians of each ranch function more or less as a tribe, governed by the owner of the ranch, conducting their own worship at its chapel. A few Indians own scattered, independent farms. Sivacá (sivak ha', "Gunpowder Water"), near Ocosingo on the trail to Tenango, is a true village, self-governing, with its own *alcalde*, under the supervision of a Ladino *maestro*. All these groups come together at

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certain times of the year for ceremonies, such as those at Chakalchib, and formerly at Campomtik, to be mentioned later. The Bachajon hold their own ceremonies at their village.

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Physically, the Tzeltal, like all the Mayance Indians, are short, averaging probably about 160 centimeters (5 feet, 4 inches) for the men, and slightly less for the women. Their build is slender, with stringy muscles, except for a good development of the calves.

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Hands and feet are small and well-formed. Their slenderness is deceptive, for their great strength lies in their legs, back, and neck, seen in their ability to carry loads of 45 kilograms (100 lbs.) and upwards, all day up and down hill without undue fatigue. Taking in a tump-line a load under which they cannot rise from the floor.

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FIG. 279.—Finca Tecojá, Chis. Houses of Indians attached to the Finca.

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without help, they will carry it with ease. The lifting power of their arms is less than that of Americans or Ladinos. Their headform is meso- to brachycephalic, and the cranium is small. Deformation in the shape of a marked depression just above the juncture of the hair-line and the forehead, due to the use of a tump-line from early infancy, may be responsible for the conical appearance of the top of the skull. Noses are, on the whole, mesorrhine and small, with little appearance of the famous "Maya Nose," and then in a narrow form, lacking the width of nostril seen in pre-historic figures. Prognathism is slight, alveolar prognathism being the more common, particularly in children. Hair form is straight, coarse, and black. Gray hair or baldness are very unusual. Body hair, as far as could be observed,

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tune. The men's shirt is more of a tunic, home woven, without cuffs, collar, or buttons, with a V-neck, and much longer. It may be tucked in under the trousers or worn outside, with the sash over all. Their trousers are sometimes wrapped at the ankles with tape. On the haciendas, a great deal of ordinary European clothing, bought at the local stores, is worn. 291
[177]

The women's dress does not differ from the Bachajón, save for a coarse red sash with yellow stripes, which comes from Comitán.

Houses, *na'*, are of two kinds, the normal, highland type found in Ocosingo Valley and in Bachajón Village itself, and a palm-roofed variant, not unlike the houses of the lowlands, found among the Bachajón in the jungle region (fig. 287). 342
[184]



FIG. 286—El Encanto, Chi. Bark Sandals.

The roof of the normal type, made of a grass thatch laid on in overlapping bundles to a thickness of about twenty centimeters, is called *winikak*. It stands independently of the walls, being supported on cross-beams laid from the main uprights, *kuk'up*. A hip roof is always used for a true dwelling. Often the building is under-cut at one end, so that a small porch is made, on which the door opens. [291]
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The walls, *p'ahk*, are of upright sticks stuck in the ground and lashed with lianas, standing without support, separate from the frame. Usually they are thinly plastered with mud. The manner of building the frame itself is described below.

Those of the Bachajón living in the close jungle, where grass is not available, thatch their roofs with palm, when they are called *can*. The leaves are usually of the *chiapai*, *tcyapai*, or *chichon*, *ak'te*. Banana leaves are sometimes used for temporary structures, but fray too readily. Owing to the warmer climate, the walls are not plastered, and often part of the house is un-walled. Usually the porch is omitted. A careful study was made of a house of this type about half a mile from the Finca Encanto, which was a good example save that, being in an open space where grass was plentiful, it was grass thatched.

123 Visiting such a house is not a mere, simple social affair. Here,
648 on a steep-sided and slippery natural hill, lived a family belonging
to a notoriously exclusive people. Our hostess seemed suspicious
of the visit at first, although one visitor was a "Melicano," one of
the pair who had already acquired a good reputation with the In-
dians, and his guide, Señor Aguilar, was known to be a friend. Men
in felt hats and boots seldom visited those houses for good purposes;
at the best, they might be expected to make off with a quantity of
eggs and tortillas without paying their value—at the worst, the head
of the house might be haled away for forced labour, or there might
be a fight, the pigs killed, and the little hut set afire. The family
consisted of a married couple their small son, and two grown girls.
On our first visit the wife alone was there. She was at first sullen
and a little frightened, but becoming reassured by degrees, showed

herself to be a placid,
dignified woman, pleas-
ant, neat, and in many
ways an ideal type of
the traditional housewife.
After we had given
medicine to one of the
girls for cold, and to the
husband for mild fever,
with a gaudy chromo of
a saint to decorate the
family altar, they came
to take us for granted,
and allowed us to see un-
folding the harmonious,
dignified family life, with
its feeling of unvoiced yet real affection that is so typical of the

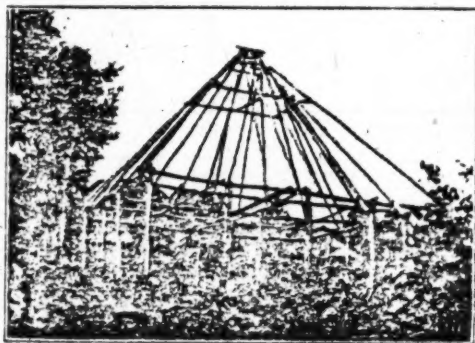


FIG. 287—Cancuc, Chis. Frame of house, illustrating
type used in whole area.

the American Indian where European contact has been slight. The
little house, only half walled, and small—about 15 x 13½ feet—was
always neat, its dirt floor swept clean, each small possession in its
place. There was a faint smell of wood-smoke and earth, with the
scent of the rich jungle drifting in, the sound of low-voiced talk,
wind in grass, or the grind and thump of the metates, now and then
laughter.

The house was a rectangle, 4.90 x 4.20 meters (figs. 288-289),
the front of the house being on a short side. The back and slightly
less than half of the sides were walled with close-planted, upright
poles, without plastering. To wooden beds, *waixyivel*, like low
tables, were built into the corners thus framed. Four corner-posts,

HOUSE AT EL ENCANTO

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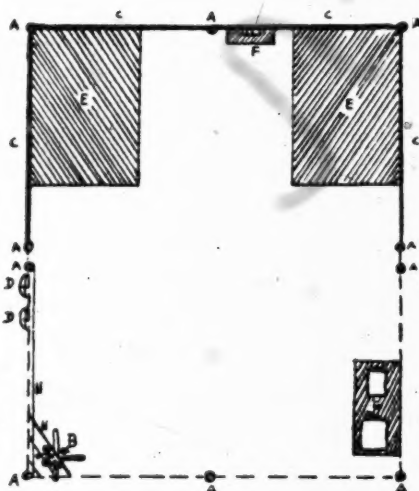


FIG. 288—El Encanto, Chis. Bachajon House. Plan.
(Scale 5:100).

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| A. Uprights, kuk'up. | E. Beds. |
| B. Fire. | F. Altar. |
| C. Wall, p'ahk. | G. Table with Metates. |
| D. Rat Trap. | H. Racks. |

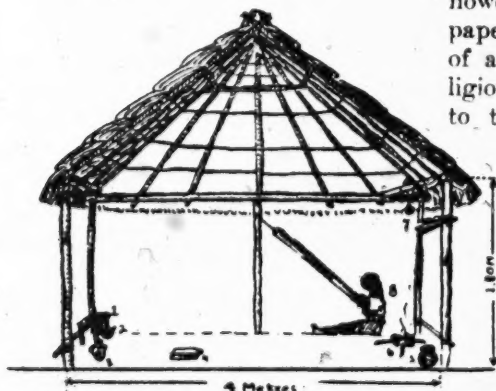


FIG. 289—El Encanto, Chis. Section of Bachajon House.

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| 1. Table, ahk'en, with Metates. | 5. Olla, ocom. |
| 2. Basket of clay, tzavak tum. | 6. Fire, kak'. |
| 3. Tenango water jar, k'ip. | 7. Rack, baxtet, with packages. |
| 4. Squatting chair, tsamate. | 8. Woman weaving. |

a central front and back post, and two posts close together on each side at the ends of the walls, supported the roof-beams. There were no horizontal members save the plates, following the line of the eaves. The rafters were built up from these direct to the ridge-pole, joined by light cross pieces, or thatching-poles, laid on outside. Near the top they were braced by a purlin of heavy logs on the inside. From floor to eaves it was 1.80 meters, and about the same from eaves to the ridge-pole. The floor was of hard dirt, fairly well levelled, and well swept. We were told that situations on hills, such as this, are commonly chosen to assure drainage, and that there is no orientation.

The altar, a table and a large cross decorated with flowers, pine-tips, and bits of paper, which will be spoken of again when discussing religion, was placed at the back to the right of the middle post. In front, to the right, was the table, ahk'en, on which were two metates, or grinding stones. They were legless, one end being raised slightly by propping with stones. The finer one was called *skaltca-tut* ("metate-small"), it was made of a fine, sandy lime-

353 Five wild boars' jaws and an armadillo's tail
[231] hung in the eaves so that the dogs might see them, to prevent their
[415] going away or losing heart. A swizzle stick, *mahas*, about 40 centi-
[224] meters long, was used for stirring cocoa. It is made by cutting a
twig above a joint with four branches. Two rat traps, *yakul*, just
outside the hut, were exact models of the larger deadfalls used for
jaguars (see fig. 308).

[291] Add to this the clothes on the inhabitants backs, and the man's
[411] machete, and you will have a complete list of the worldly possessions,
large and small, of a Bachajón family—altogether some forty-four
different kinds of things. We assembled as many together as pos-
[126] sible, arranging them as for a feast, and placed in the middle the

small son of the house, and a
little monkey of a boy, Miguel,
who accompanied us to run
errands (fig. 292).



FIG. 292—Bachajón boy guests.

If mud-plastered walls are
added to this description, you
have a typical Ocosingo Valley
house. Change the grass roof
to palm, it is the kind to be seen
in the jungle country.

At Muxculja (*muckul ha*,
"Covered Water"), in the
jungle, our Indians built us a
trail shelter or hut of the type
called in Spanish *champa*, and
in Tzeltal *tutna'*, "small house."
This enabled us to note the man-
ner of building the frame-work
and laying on the roof. The
kind of *champa* built for us,
with an A-roof and gable ends,

is called *gwakac na'*, "cow house"; the more common type built by
the Indians when alone, a simple lean-to, is called *lestee-pat* (should
be *lestee-pahk?*) "only one wall."

Our shelter being more than usually pretentious, we could ob-
serve most of the steps in building a true house, although, of course,
the form here was different and the construction much lighter (figs.
293-294). It was three meters, fifty-one centimeters long by three
meters wide, two meters high at the ridge-pole, one at the eaves.
[461] It had no walls. From the construction of the outline of the frame
to the completed thatching it took fifty minutes for four men, later
only two, working without haste.

only two, working without haste. The only tools used were machetes, which served even for digging the post-holes and for trenching. 342
[412]

The elementary frame consisted in two forked upright posts, *makan-te*, supporting the ridge-pole, *kabaiye-te*, four forked corner posts, *oix*, two plate-poles, *tsan-te*, and gable-rafters, *sak-te*.

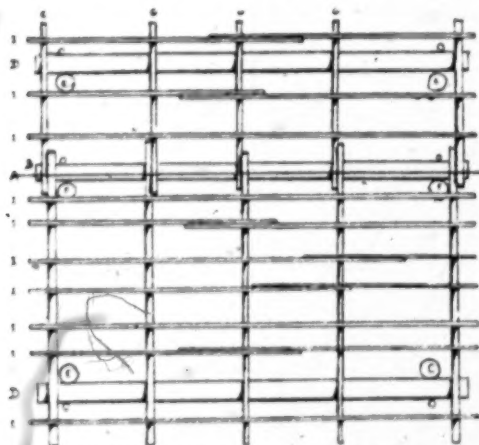


FIG. 293—Formalized plan of roof of shelter.

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|---|-----------------------------------|
| A. False ridge-pole, <i>kabaiyete</i> . | E. Corner posts, <i>oix</i> . |
| B. Ridge-pole, <i>kabaiyete</i> . | F. Center posts, <i>makante</i> . |
| C. Gable rafters, <i>sakte</i> . | G. Rafter, <i>sakte</i> (?). |
| D. Plates, <i>tsan-te</i> . | H. Thatching-poles, <i>butl</i> . |

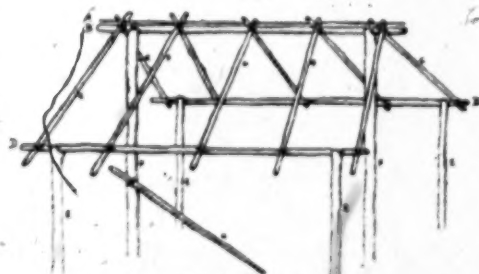


FIG. 294—Sketch of frame of shelter.

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|---|--|
| A. False ridge-pole, <i>kabaiyete</i> . | F. Center posts, <i>makante</i> . |
| B. Ridge-pole, <i>kabaiyete</i> . | G. Rafter, <i>sakte</i> (?). |
| C. Gable rafters, <i>sakte</i> . | H. Staging for work on under side of roof. |
| D. Plates, <i>tsan-te</i> . | |
| E. Corner posts, <i>oix</i> . | |

Three lighter poles were then laid on each side as rafters, and lashed to the ridge and plates with lianas. Thatching-rods were laid parallel to the ridge-pole across them, they were also lashed with lianas, the vines being laid along the rafters in a spiral, with a criss-cross hitch at each rod. A light false ridge-pole was laid over the true one, resting in the crotches of the crossed gable-rafters. It was said that this was also called *kabaiyete*. Projecting ends of sticks were then trimmed.

Palm-leaves were gathered in bundles of four, tied together with their own base-fronds. These were laid on in the manner of shingles, and the stems tied down to the thatching rods with a spiral running liana similar to that binding the poles. As the leaves are

over a meter long, only four rows were needed to cover the long side of the roof, allowing a considerable over-hang, although more would have been used in a permanent dwelling. A row of over-lapping leaves was laid on top of and parallel to the false ridge-pole, bound down, and secured with yet another light stick.

- 342 The thatching was done by one man on the roof and another, who stood on a slanting stick tied to one of the center uprights, to help the first pass the liana around.

The angle of the long side not being steep enough, the roof leaked. Two men held the eaves-pole on their shoulders while the rest drove the corner posts in deeper, thus making the angle sharper and improving the shed.

- [356] Repairs in thatch are made by laying new bundles of leaves directly over the old, the stems being stitched into the thatch with a liana, and a wooden needle made on the spot.

- 343 In all the larger settlements sweat-baths, *pus*, are located (figs. 295-296). The essential element is a cube of wattle thickly plastered



FIG. 295—Tenango, Chic. Sweat House of same type used in Ocosingo Valley.

with mud, about a meter to a meter and a half in all measurements, with a small doorway in one end. The door is of the same construction, or of boards. At Sivacá there were thatched roofs above the baths, but entirely separate from them. Water poured on hot stones is used in them. The purpose appears to be medicinal rather than ceremonial.

- 323 All the Highland Indians make vessels of clay, with the possible exception of the Tenejapeños. Among the Bachajon and at Sivacá, the art is not very well developed, only the most common forms being made, without decoration. Their clay, *teavek lum*, ("bees-wax earth"), is found in the banks of many small streams. It is a

[135]

- 323 She formed the base of her pot rapidly in a saucer-like clay form, *hutstahibe* ("rest"). When the bottom was finished, she took it out and laid it on a broad leaf. The work progressed surprisingly quickly and without pause, the potter's hands moving with great speed and precision; the slapping sound as she patted the clay into position was unceasing. The clay was put on in slabs and built upwards, contrary to the coiling technique of the Southwest, the bowl on its leaf being turned rapidly as she worked around the sides. The finishing was done with her hands. The completed bowl was symmetrical, but not very smooth. It was then set in the sun to dry (fig. 298).

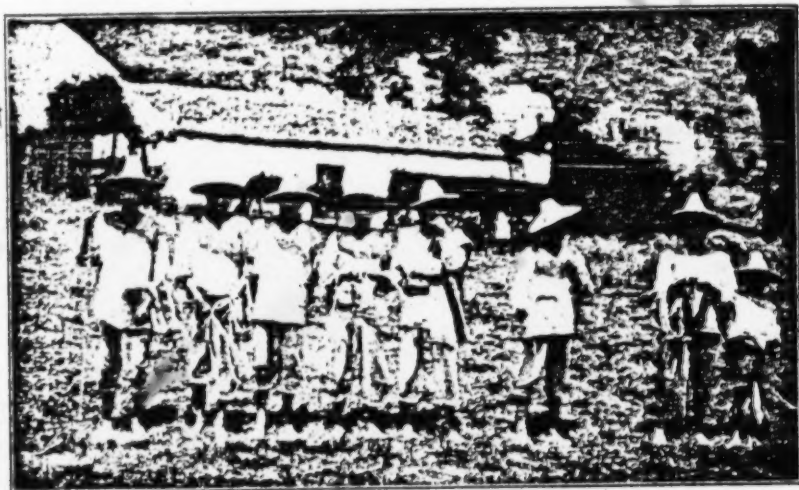


FIG. 297—Sivacá, Chiá. The men of the town with the Alcalde on the left.

- 323 The larger forms are started in a flat, gourd dish, and the *tacts* bowls (see below) in an ordinary drinking gourd. Large tubs, when drying, are protected by leaves covering the rim, and are placed on leaves in the gourd dishes used as forms. The leaves are to prevent their drying too quickly and cracking. When cracks do occur, they are filled in with fresh clay. After enough pots are ready, there is a baking, apparently a community affair. I was told that the pottery was ranged in a line, the pine-fuel being laid up in an A-roof over it, forming a long tunnel, through which the draft ensures a brisk fire. One would expect from such a process that the vessels would be much blackened from contact with the fuel, which was not the case in the new ones that I examined, all having an even

red-gold colour. The baking observed at Amatenango, which is described in the following chapter, was quite different. 323

The forms made at Sivacá are: (Fig. 299) a tub, *pok'et*; cooking pots or *ollas*, *ocom*; form for making cooking pots, *hutstahibe*; bowl, *tsets*; stand for bowl, *awaliko*; form for making sugar, with a hole in the bottom, *hor'mo*; tortilla griddle, *tsamets*; and a perforated olla for washing corn, *tcistcinar*.

The Bachajon make most of these also, but the tub and clay *tsets* are rare, a gourd often serving for the latter. The surfaces are less well smoothed. In no case was any attempt at decoration observed. It should be noted in this respect, however, that almost all of these would eventually be quite blackened with smoke.



FIG. 299—Sivacá, Chis. Woman making pottery.

[142]
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[302]
[516]
[342] .

Among the forms shown in the figures, it will be noticed that there is no piece with a markedly contracted neck; such work seems to be beyond their abilities. All through this district the big *cantaras* or water jars are imported from Tenango, and will be discussed in the next chapter.

In general throughout Ocosingo Valley white cloth for men's clothes and women's blouses, made of native cotton, *na'*, as well as the men's sashes, are of local manufacture. Among the Bachajon, cloth is comparatively little woven, but sashes are always home made. The coloured thread is usually bought in stores. Weaving is entirely done by the women. 286
[291]

the thigh. The spinning is done with the left hand, the right holding and drawing out the thread, *tsahalna'* (fig. 302-d). 283

The thread is then arranged for the warp on a form called *kumen* (fig. 302-c). This is a pole 1.40 meters long, notched at intervals on one side, and with a groove in one end joining two unnotched sides. In one of the notches, according to the length of thread desired, is placed a cross stick, *tumin-te*, (equals *kumen-te*?), 45 centimeters long. The thread is laid from one end of this cross stick, through the groove, around to the other end of the cross stick, and so, back and forth, until the required number of woof-strands are prepared. The loops around one half of the cross stick are then transferred to the head-stick of the loom, those around the other to the foot-stick, and the woof is ready. At the head end, the loops are braided for the selvage. 286



FIG. 301.—Sivaca, Chi. Woman Winding Thread.

by a broad leather strap, *ku'epat*, thus holding the set-up taut (fig. 303). At a little distance below the head-stick, the woof-strands are crossed, those underneath being carried on top, and held in place

The loom, *holél*,* has no rigid frame. The woof is stretched over the head and foot-sticks, *wolol-te*. The head-stick is fastened to a beam in the house or to a branch, usually more than a meter above the ground. Before this the weaver sits, with the foot-stick strapped to her

**holél* is one of a large class of words ending in -*ol*, -*él*, or -*il*, which are at once verbal nouns and infinitives; e. g. *tal-il*, to come, or the act of coming, corresponding to the Latin *venire* and *veniendo*. *hol-il* primarily means to weave, here it is also applied to the loom.

(342)
(284)
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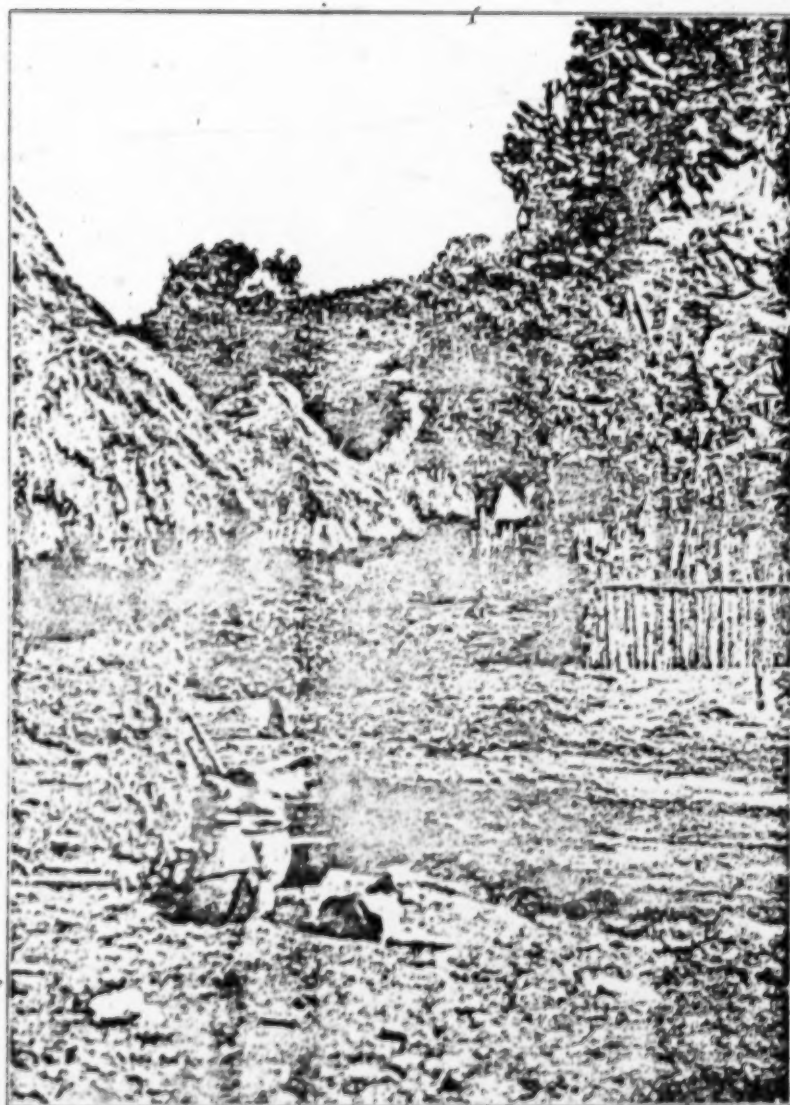
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(193)

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Tenango

TENANGO VILLAGE

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FIG. 311—Tenango, Chi. Street Scene.

133 green wall away to the westward. Midway, there is a break in the
slope, with a dramatic splash of deep red cliffs, in violent contrast
241 to the fertile grass and soft tones of the limestone outcrops. Only
the upper end of this valley belongs to Tenango, so little, in fact
that the inhabitants cannot practice the usual, sprawling milpa sys-
[35] tem of agriculture. The very yards are planted, and the fields
[41] start almost in the village, radiating from it in a close patchwork
as in Europe. Everything is fenced with roughly split planks set
361 through the cornfields. The houses with their yards lie close about
an open plaza in which are the grey bones of a ruined church, a

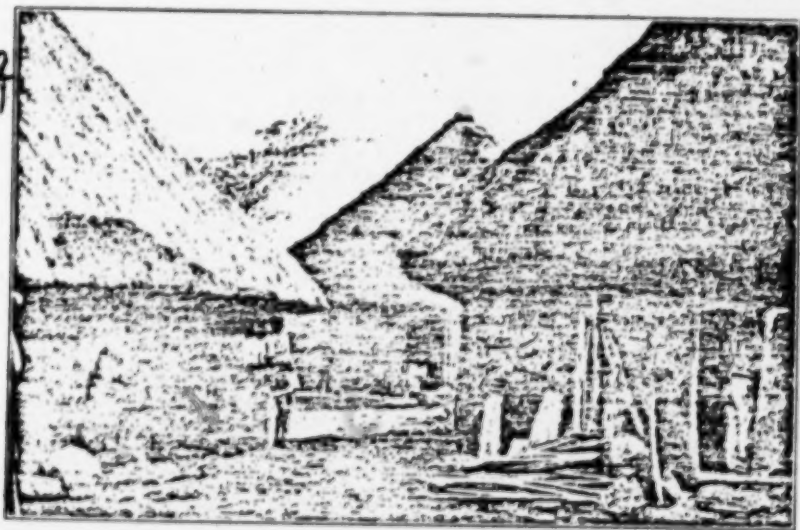


FIG. 310—Tenango, Chis. Houses.

361 whitewashed, palm-roofed native one, and the shack of a Cabildo for
245 the Maestro. The streets are lined with useful trees, oranges, gourds,
363 and a few bananas, which do poorly at this altitude.

342 The houses are square and well-made with walls of broad, split
planks covered with mud (figs. 311-312). The roofs are steeply
thatched and pyramidal, or have a short ridge along which broken
pots are laid after the manner of tiles. The frame-work differs from
that described in the last chapter in having cross-pieces laid between
[354] the plates. There are no chimneys, the smoke is allowed to seep
through the thatch, keeping out vermin and making the roofs steam
like a clam-bake.

that he was invited into her house, presumably to take shelter from the evening rain that was beginning to fall. The house, of which he sketched a hurried plan (fig. 324) was more rectangular than is usual, the prevailing type being square with a pyramidal roof. He entered through a low doorway, closed with a wooden door on leather hinges. Although the ridge of the roof was high, the many cross poles reaching from the top of one wall to the other made it necessary to stoop. The writer squatted by the door, facing the fire, which smoked merrily in the closed room. The old woman immediately set to shaping a pile of tortillas for baking. Along either wall was a well-made bench, decorated with notches along the top and geometric designs on the back, similar to the benches on the Cabildo porch (fig. 325). These and a sturdy table that was stored on top of the stringers were said to be purely local products. By the door stood a big jar, a full meter in height, crude and undecorated (fig. 326). There was the usual collection of ollas and gourds, and one other new form, an open-mouthed pot about eight centimeters high and as many in diameter, flat bottomed, with a handle on one side, called *hite* (fig. 327). In the thick smoke, it was hard to see anything. I was in-



FIG. 323—Cancuc, Chi.
Drinking scaffold.

usual collection of ollas and gourds, and one other new form, an open-mouthed pot about eight centimeters high and as many in diameter, flat bottomed, with a handle on one side, called *hite* (fig. 327). In the thick smoke, it was hard to see anything. I was in-

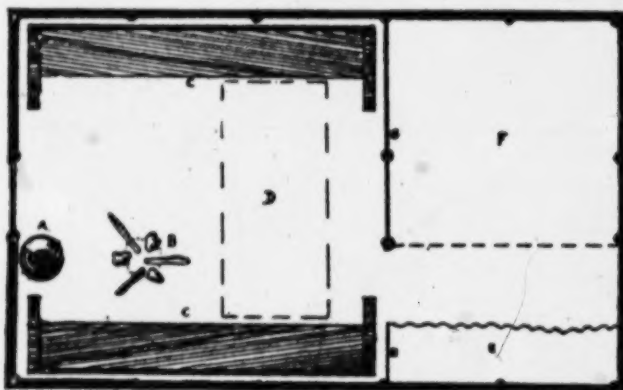


FIG. 324—Cancuc, Chi. Plan of House.

terested to note that my hostess' eyes watered nearly as much as my own. In the darker end of the house I could make out corn stacked neatly along one wall, and a partition that presumably hid the beds. For a while the woman answered the few questions that I could make her understand by means of signs, my half-a-dozen words of Tzeltal,

estimate, with their own, regular Indian administration under the control of the Ladino government. The *Presidente Municipal*, a most obliging man, got the Indian *Presidente* for us, whom we photographed by the last light of the day (fig. 329). Through this chief, men were sent out to bring in grass; they returned with enormous, green bundles as big as themselves.

The Indian houses outside the town differ from those previously described in the possession of a sort of porch, or part under the roof in front screened with boards, introductory to the house itself.

The Tenejapeños are strongly built, thickset, and short, with enormously powerful calves. In fact the chief industry of the tribe is acting as porters. They go in large bands to places at a considerable distance to take or bring back loads, competing successfully with the Chamula pack-trains. In this the women are as proficient as the men. Their colour is dark, a rich brown, more red than golden, with distinctly pink cheeks showing through in the case of the children and old people. The men are almost beardless. Faces are rather broad and round* (fig. 330).

The essential parts of a man's costume are a pair of shorts and a brown and white striped Chamula Indian blanket, worn as a poncho. Two of these blankets may be comfortably worn in that climate. Hats, when used, are also of Chamula make, of straw with a flat brim, and round, close-fitting crown pointed at the top. Usually they are decorated with ribbons. A sash of white material may be worn, the ends of which, hanging down in front, are elaborately embroidered (fig. 331). The



FIG. 329.—Tenejapa, Chi. The chief of the Tenejapeños.

*Stacy (1902) made some measurements upon these people, the most important of which are summarized here. They show an interesting variability.

STATURE IN MILLIMETERS									
Mean	Maximum	Minimum	Range	Below 1000	1000—1050	1050—1100	Above 1100	Total	
1,557	1,732	1,405	327	75	18	8	1	100	
			Mean	Maximum	Minimum			Range	
CEPHALIC INDEX			73.3	85.4	68.9			16.5	
FACIAL INDEX			81.6	84.5	79.6			4.9	
NASAL INDEX			82.8	102.2	64.1			38.1	

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291 shorts are also usually embroidered in red and yellow. The chief had
[123] such a pair, very fine and gaudy, which we asked to see. He took
[293] them off to show us, but when we tried to buy them from him he
became furiously angry and abusive. Sandals, when worn, are of
the ordinary type. Most of the Indians carry a staff of some kind.

[531] The women wear the typical blue skirt, but the blouse, cut like
a poncho, is usually tucked inside and heavily embroidered about the
neck and shoulders. This work takes a long time, and the finished
blouses are valued very highly.

[342]
[231]
[854]
←



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621
563
→

[293]
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When worn outside they nearly cover the skirts, which are just knee length. Red sashes with a yellow stripe from Tapachula, of the kind worn also around Ocosingo, bind the skirts at the waist. Hair is done in two braids with dark red ribbon, or tied up in a knot over the forehead as at Cancuc.

Men and women alike wear cheap, gay-coloured necklaces, usually rosaries.

The Indians move with great freedom through the town and lounge in company with the Ladinos on the broad porch of the Town Hall. The officials are distinguished by silver-headed canes with black tassels. In lieu of a Maestro, they are directly under the Ladino *Presidente Municipal*, and their disputes are tried by the local judge. Their lawsuits have a mediaeval air, carried on publicly with great clamor on the Town Hall porch, and all concerned speaking with the utmost freedom. A breach of promise case was observed in the course of trial. It went on for at least two hours with never less than two Indians, usually women, speaking at once. One could not but admire the patience of the rather bored and indifferent judge.

FIG. 230.—Tenejapa, Chis. Indians in the street.

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liely with great clamor on the Town Hall porch, and all concerned speaking with the utmost freedom. A breach of promise case was observed in the course of trial. It went on for at least two hours with never less than two Indians, usually women, speaking at once. One could not but admire the patience of the rather bored and indifferent judge.

114 The cargadores from Cancuc arrived shortly after dark, still lively despite the long day and steep climb. More remarkable still.

361 Amatenango lies in an open valley. It is estimated at three
• 342 hundred houses, each in a fenced yard of good size, and shaded with
351 fruit trees. The houses are large and well built, of mud and grass
245 thatch, with porches. The small church and Town Hall are tiled-
346 roof and stuccoed. The fields, which lie close around the town, and
344 the gardens in the town itself are watered by a stream brought down
241 a very pretty, roaring flume from higher land behind the village.
312 The irrigation system is fairly elaborate, and is unique in this area
as far as we know.

323 The pottery, which is their chief product, is almost all of one
shape, a sphere, with three handles and a narrow bottle-neck with a
flat lip. The decoration does not vary. Both shape and design, how-

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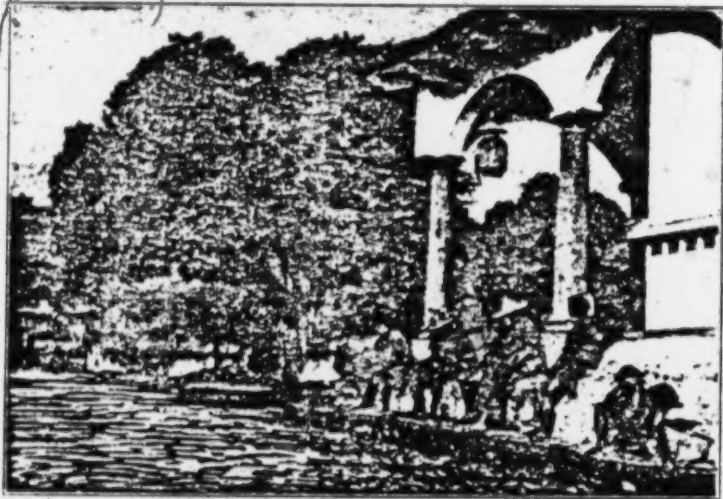


FIG. 333—Tenejapa, Chi. Indians at the Town Hall.

323 ever, are of considerable charm. The polish is fine and smooth, giving
an even golden-red colour all over, with the decoration in a deep,
reddish brown. No such fine, finished work is done by other tribes in
the area. The pots are baked by placing them on a rectangle of
boards, two or more meters square, around a hot fire. The woman
in charge turns them until they are done (fig. 333). These pots are
[443] carried by the men as far as San Cristóbal, where they are redis-
[442] tributed, and to Nenton in Guatemala. Their industry is sufficient
to enable them to maintain mules for carrying their goods, although
both men and beasts are equally loaded.

Spirits and Places

11

ties to the center. They register births and deaths in the township center, but they do not have any representation in the cabildo. The populations have no identification with Indian subgroups, speak Spanish, and are oriented to the regional rather than the local economic center. The plantations remaining in the area, classified as *ranchos* in the national census, employ Indians from the center. Their only relationship to the central authority is to get help in recruiting additional laborers. Recruitment of labor is no longer coercive as it was prior to the 1930s when the low wage rate could not attract the help needed. Announcements of the need for workers are made by the president on the loudspeaker system of the town, and men voluntarily go to the plantations.

SPIRIT DOMAINS

The link between people and place is through the media of the spirits (*éuleletik*) of persons and of locale. The relationship is maintained through a set of rules governing the behavior among spirits of people and of places. These rules derive from myths and stories of encounters which define the character of the spirits in each of the domains. Danger is localized in a series of caves which are avoided. Benevolent, or guardian, spirits inhabit a different set of sites, where ceremonies are conducted that maintain the well-being of the individual and of the community. By locating and circumscribing places of danger and guardianship, the members of the community can supplicate helpful spirits and avoid evil; they are delivered from fear of the unknown and provided with a rationale for dealing with fear of the known.

The places where spirits meet are outlined in Table 3. The first group includes spirits which are supplicated, the second, dangerous spirits which are avoided or approached only by powerful persons.

The house spirits. The spirits of inhabitants and of the house meet at the center post at the rear wall of the house. The spirit of the house lives in this post. Those who claim to have seen the house spirit say he is a small Ladino child. He is capricious, and if he is not happy, he may admit the evil spirits who will eat the souls of the inmates. His appe-

- 342 tite must be satisfied when the house is first occupied and when the chil-
 776 dren of the house fall ill from a sickness diagnosed by a curer as a result of
 753 their souls being eaten. The souls of the inmates of the house hover near
 the center post when they are not in the body. The soul calling ceremony
 342 is held near this center post. If someone is cured in a house not his own,
 755 he must not sit near this post because his soul will be confused with those
 of the inmates of the house. The curing arch is erected directly before the
 center post, over the square hole in which the ceremonial offering of a
 sheep's head is buried when the house is built. A live chicken is buried in
 this spot if the illness is severe.

TABLE 3. Spirits and Places

Place	Place spirit	Person spirit
776 778 769 Loci of spirits to be supplicated		
House	Spirit of the house (s'ulel na)	Spirits of children (s'uleletik yuntikil)
Spring of San Nicolás	Little Ladino (ē'in kailan)	Spirits of male patients (s'uleletik yu'un keremetik)
Spring of Pahaltón	Little Ladina (ē'in jinlan)	Spirits of female patients (s'uleletik yu'un ?a'isetik)
Cave of Ancestors	Lopez brothers (Suntonetik)	Spirits of towns- people (s'uleletik spil tek'um)
Loci of spirits to be avoided		
Cave of Don David	Ladino moneylender (Klabil)	Petitioners for wealth
Cave of the Black Man	Devil, or black man, (?ihk'al winik)	Witches
Cave of Juan Santos	Deceased recipient of wealth from Cave	Petitioners for wealth
Stone Cave	Hwan Santil Owner of cave (Yahwal s'ēn)	Petitioners for wealth
Cave of Elotes	Owner of cave (Yahwal s'ēn)	Petitioners for wealth
Cave of the Star	Owner of star (Yahwal ?ek')	Curers and witches

Spirits and Places

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The four sides of the square house are protected by palm crosses which were nailed to each of the four corner posts during the ceremony of the initiation of the house. These crosses prevent the entry of evil. A fifth cross on the door post, replaced each year on the Day of the Cross, ensures the guardianship of San Pedro the Martyr, the Lord of Lightning.⁵

The idea of the similarity in substance between a house and its inmates originates in the notions about soil (*lum*) and mud (*?ač'al*). An origin myth concerning the creation of man indicates that God created man out of soil and this mythical identification is reiterated in prayers when the fleshy part of the body is referred to as *hlumeletik*, our soil, and *kač'aletik*, our mud. Whatever soil man comes into contact with—in his house, in the backyard, or in his travels, may contain some of his soul. This belief is demonstrated in the following practices: When a person's soul is lost because of a fright, such as falling or "seeing a spirit," the soil where the incident occurred is scraped into a shirt or skirt belonging to him and deposited in the soil below the head of his bed. Some older informants say that the soil from beneath the bed is scraped up and deposited in the coffin of a deceased inmate of the house, but I have never seen this done. This intimate relation between soul and soil was best illustrated to us when our landlord refused to let us put a cement floor in the interior of his house since it would interfere with the practices described above and other customs in the house ceremonies mentioned below.

The house is constructed in two stages. The completion of each stage requires a ceremony linking the spirits of the inmates to that of the dwelling. The first stage is the erection of the house posts and the wooden frame. When the roof is covered with wood shingles, thatch, or tile, the family may set up temporary walls of boards. They wait until the rainy season to complete the second stage of building up the walls with mud. The first ceremony, called "fiesta for the house," is for "the spirit which resides in the posts," and the second, called "meal for the house," is to feed "the spirit of the house earth." People believe that the mud walls, like their fleshy counterpart, the human body, require nourishment.

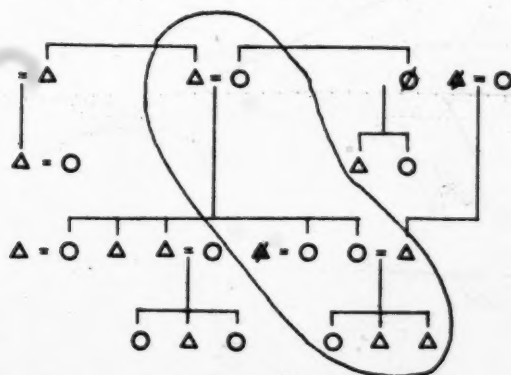
5. San Pedro Martyr is referred to by the Indians as *Tatik Martil* and is identified with the pre-Conquest deity Lord of Lightning, or *Tatik Ca'uk*.

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First house fiesta. In preparation for the fiesta to inaugurate the wooden frame of the house, the older men of the household and the curers make palm crosses called *Tatik Martil*, another reference to San Pedro Martyr. Older men are chosen to do this task because their procreative powers will not be endangered by handling this powerful symbol. Branches of the bushes growing near the springwater of San Nicolás are cut by the younger men of the household to be arranged in an arch, while the women make incense burners and clay candle holders. The protective symbols used in the fiesta—the arch of branches and flowers, the candles, liquor, handrolled cigarettes, palm crosses, and springwater in a gourd—are arranged before the center post of the back wall of the house.

Fig. 1. Relatives Present at House Fiesta

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Encircled group will live in house.

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The activities of a house fiesta observed in 1966 are described below.

The future occupants of the house sat in a row facing the curing arch. Two curers officiated, the elder a resident of the side of the dual division in which the houseowner lives and the second from the barrio in which his son-in-law, Santiago, was born. The elder curer lit the candles at the center post of the back wall, while the younger curer lit those at the center post in the middle wall. The mother of Santiago lit the incense and placed

Spirits and Places

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it before he arch. The younger curer then took a bunch of the branches of spring bushes and brushed each person over the head, shoulders, back, arms, and legs. Liquor was passed around to the visitors and participants. The elder curer took the bunch of branches, prayed, and brushed the future occupants. The younger curer followed him with another brushing.

The elder curer put some powder in the springwater. He then took a rattle, stuck it in a bunch of the leaves from the spring, gave it a couple of shakes as though testing it, and handed it to one of the b'alnial (young male assistants). He then stood before the candles at the back center post, bowed to it, turned, and bowed to the opposite center post. He poured the springwater in a gourd and gave it to Juliana, the houseowner's daughter, who passed it to each member of the household. The curer then took out four cigarettes and put them on either side of the candles. He greeted everyone present and delivered the following prayer:

May no witchcraft enter.

May all the children be cared for.

I can see and hear who enters.

Of one heart are the women, of one heart are the men.

Santiago began to play the guitar as his wife, Alberta, brought in the coffee and rolls. She handed the first cup to the elder curer. This was followed with a serving of rice and tomatoes. Before he began to eat, the curer said, "good afternoon" to all present.

After the meal, the elder curer led the household members outside. He held one of the palm crosses at the corner post of the house and prayed; then Santiago pounded in a nail to hold it. Each member of the household, including the small children of Alberta, went up and kissed the cross in turn. They went on to the other main posts of the exterior of the house where they did the same thing. They entered the house and continued drinking the rest of the afternoon. Cigarettes were passed around, and the men began to joke. Drinking is compulsory: everyone who attends must drink equal amounts of the liquor served.

Each of the ritual items is introduced because it contains a powerful soul. The branches and the springwater contain souls associated with the

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527 spring. The gourd is used as a container for the springwater because, like
774 all growing plants and unlike metal or glass containers, it has a soul. The
788 soul of the tobacco plant is considered particularly strong. The smoke of
[182] the candles and incense are the media through which prayers to the spirit
of the house are transmitted.

The house fiesta serves three functions: (1) introducing the spirit of
342 the house inmates to the house spirit, (2) creating a harmonious setting
527 for spiritual interaction of the members of the household and the house
788 spirit, (3) protecting the house against the intrusion of evil. The introduc-
776 tion is achieved by brushing the household members with the branches
533 from the spring, and the harmony is brought about by drinking liquor,
playing the guitar, and dancing. The music of the seed gourd, the guitar,
and sometimes a radio or phonograph makes the residents, their guests,
and the house spirit happy, or "of one heart." Protection is insured by
[188] nailing the palm crosses representing the Lord of the Lightning to the
house posts.

342 *Second house fiesta* ("meal for the house"). When a meal is
527 given to the spirit of the house earth, the house is arranged as for the
782 house fiesta with curing arches set in front of the center posts at the back
756 and middle walls. The same guests are invited as for the first fiesta. The
family buys a sheep and slaughters it in the morning by stringing it up to
the center post by its paws and slashing its jugular vein. When the blood
has drained into the square hole opened at the base of the center post, the
curer removes the head and buries it in the hole. Some curers bury the
four paws as well, while others prefer to add an offering of five pieces of
bread in a new pottery jar, twenty measures of chocolate, thirteen ciga-
rettes, and a bottle of liquor covered with a new cloth. The head of the
sheep is placed so that the eyes look up to watch over the inhabitants.
Some refer to it as the *me?iltatil*, identifying it with the curers (who are
called *me?iltatil* in the context of guardianship) and thus with the an-
cestor guardians.

*During the house fiesta I observed in July 1967, an old curer who had
officiated at the first ceremony served again. A neighbor, who was not re-
lated to the homeowners but who was skilled in butchering, slaughtered*

Spirits and Places

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the animal. The curer received from him the severed head and paws which he placed in a large gourd. Then the curer served a potion of herbs in springwater to all of the members of the household. The final ritual act was for the curer to smoke an article of clothing belonging to each member of the household over the incense burning in front of the center arch at the back wall. Liquor was served continually throughout the ceremony, the first drink always being given to the curer followed by one to the elder houseowner. The first drink was served immediately after the cutting of the jugular vein of the sheep. Flowing blood, water, and liquor are spirit media symbolically linked in ritual behavior. Between each of the major ritual acts—the slaughtering of the sheep, the burial of the head, the serving of the springwater and herbs, and the smoking of the clothing with incense—the curer prayed, but his prayers were so mumbled that I could not hear or record them. Informants said that it was a variation of the prayer given at the first house fiesta. After the rituals, a stew made with the sheep meat was served with tortillas to all the visitors. The music of guitar and gourd rattle, played during the ritual by young male relatives continued after the meal, and the guests remained in the house drinking and dancing for the rest of the afternoon.

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Elements of these house fiestas are repeated when any of the children of the household is ill. A severe illness, diagnosed as being caused by the devil eating the soul of the patient, requires offering a meal to the house spirit. The square hole is reopened, and a live black chicken, male if the patient is a boy and female if it is a girl, is placed inside. A food offering of one-fourth liter of liquor, one peso's worth of bread, and 50 cents' worth of chocolate is placed inside with the chicken, and a square board is fitted on top of the hole "to keep the chicken alive for eight days so that the house spirit will hear his cries." When the curing arch is removed, the hole is filled in with dirt over the chicken, now dead, which provides a meal for the spirit house earth.

755

When the houseowner is sick, an appeal for health is made to the spirit in the house post. The members of the household kiss the post, a splinter is removed and burned in an incense burner with *pom*, the resin of pine. This odor is pleasing to the house spirit.

[776]

When a serious illness caused by witchcraft has been cured, the patient

000

18 When a serious illness In the Eyes of the Ancestors
caused by witchcraft has been cured, the patient

789 must be protected against reentry of the evil by a gift of medicine to the house. Palm crosses are made for the corner posts and the entry, and a medicine consisting of a mixture of garlic and creosote, the seeds of mustard, and *poñtan*, a "hot" herb, is mixed. As the crosses are nailed on the posts, the curer marks a cross with the medicine over the palm cross. This "covers the eyes of the evil spirit" so that it will not enter the house.

776 The relationship between house spirit and the spirits of the residents is
342 an uneasy one. Fear is associated with this capricious spirit, who might make an alliance with evil spirits, and whose power is evident only in sickness and in death, never in good deeds. A sense of alienation is conveyed in the fact that the house spirit and the spirits of the spring are conceived of as Ladinos. Spirits of the house and of the landscape are exacting landlords from whom the tenants expect nothing in return for their offerings but freedom from harm. Acceptance of the offerings seals a contract between spiritual occupants that must continually be renewed in order to maintain the balance of security expressed in the phrase "to be of one heart." The payment of a "tribute" in the form of food, liquor, and entertainment is part of a larger strategy by which these Indians ensure their survival by appeasement of overlords, demanding government officials, and the very rats which live in their houses and feed on the corn they store in the eaves.

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312 *The springs.* Other meeting grounds for the spirits of people and places are the springs. The major spring, San Nicolás, is located on the southwestern periphery of the town. It provides drinking water and water for irrigating the cultivated lands. A second spring, called Pahaltón, lies closer to the village and provides a smaller stream of water directed into the canals irrigating the fields of the center. Some say the spirit of San Nicolás is a small Ladino boy; others say he is a man. The spirit of Pahaltón is a female non-Indian, or *Ladina*. The spirits of these waters are able to effect miraculous cures for patients who have lost their souls or those who are of two hearts because of upset social relations in the home. Male patients are brought to San Nicolás and female patients are brought to Pahaltón to seek a miracle. In the curing ceremony an arch of flowers entwined in pine boughs is constructed as closely as possible to the spring

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Traditional Economic Activities

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Houses are built of materials locally produced or gathered from communal resources, but new construction materials, such as tiles, require cash outlay. The average house area is thirty-six square meters divided into two main rooms. Building is usually done in February or March. After the

TABLE 12. Clothing Expenditure and Origin

	Price (pesos)	Place of origin
Men's clothing		
Kotonču from Guatemala	60	Huehuetenango
Kotonču from Mexico	40	Comitán
Shirt worn by elders	60	San Bartolomé
Underpants	15	San Bartolomé
High-backed sandals	25	San Cristóbal
Wrapped pants	25	Teopisca
Tailored shirt	30	Teopisca
Factory-made shirt	7	San Cristóbal and Comitán
Straw hats	10	Teopisca and San Cristóbal
Factory-made pants	15	Teopisca and San Cristóbal
Belt	5	Teopisca, San Cristóbal, and Comitán
Sash	7	Comitán
Huaraches	20	San Cristóbal
Women's clothing		
Wrapped skirt	40-60	Comitán
Huipile, factory-made cloth	50	San Cristóbal
Huipile, hand-loomed cloth	60	San Bartolomé
Reboza	12-16	Comitán
Apron	5	San Cristóbal
Children's clothing		
Girl's skirt	7	Teopisca
Girl's blouse	5	Teopisca
Boy's shirt	3.5	Teopisca
Boy's hat	3-4	Teopisca, San Cristóbal
Boy's pants	5	Teopisca

materials have been collected, the construction of the house frame takes about eight days' work with the cooperation of five or six men. Filling in the walls with mud takes another three days. Table 13 gives the cost of materials and transportation for one house built during my stay.

The biggest change in housing has been in the roofs. The old type of

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- 342 construction used thatch or palm leaves carried from hot country. These
177 cost only the price of renting a horse, if it was necessary, for transporta-
435 tion. Roofs made of these materials have to be replaced every seven or
[492] eight years. Each rethatching requires three days' work with four or five
helpers, and the houseowner must provide a meal for them and their fami-
lies. He spends about 25 pesos for meat and uses two or three liters of
corn; the total cost is about 75 pesos. Another kind of roof is made of
wooden shingles bought in the neighboring town. These are fixed to the
housetops with wooden pegs, and the total cost is about 200 pesos. This
lasts ten or twelve years with replacement of individual shingles. Tile
roofs have the highest initial cost, 800 pesos, but the lowest maintenance in
labor.

TABLE 13. Construction Costs for House, 1965

	Cost (pesos)
Supplies	
Roof tiles (1,000)	800
Posts and poles	*
Planks	40
Door	100
Window frame	30
Services	
Transportation of tiles	30
Transportation of posts and poles	206
Carpenter	50
Food for helpers	75
TOTAL	1,331

* Obtained free from communal woods.

- 342 House walls are preferably made of mud mixed with lime poured into
an interlacing of cane poles set between the house posts and tied with a
handmade fiber rope. Another temporary type of construction, which does
not offer as good insulation, is made of board planks. Sweatbaths are
made by digging out a floor about 2.5 meters square, raising stones in an
oval shape over this, and plastering them with mud. The I.N.I. tried to in-
343 troduce latrines, but no more than a half dozen of the cement toilet seats
[514] they gave away as demonstrators were put into use. Latrines are consid-
[647] ered to be dirty since the pigs and dogs
[177] cannot scavenge the feces.
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Traditional Economic Activities

ered to be dirty since the pigs and dogs cannot scavenge the feces. Mothers train their children to have bowel movements in the evening when darkness offers them privacy in the houseyard.

Changes in house types in the seven-year period from my first census in 1958 to the second in 1964 are tabulated in Table 14. There has been a general improvement in the standards: tile roofs have increased from 1 to 20.1 percent. The increase has been at the expense of both wood shingle (declined 8.3 percent) and of thatch and palm leaf (declined 9.8 percent).

TABLE 14. Types of House Construction

	1958*		1964†	
	Number of houses	Percent of all houses	Number of houses	Percent of all houses
Roofs				
Tile	1	1	58	20
Shingle	27	23	41	14
Thatch or palm	87	76	190	66
Walls				
Board plank	17	15	66	23
Wattle and daub	98	85	223	77
Sweatbath				
Have	60	52	120	42
Have not	54	47	169	58
Unknown	1	1		

* Based on sample of 115 houses.

† Based on total survey of houses in center with 22 unspecified.

The numbers of houses with wood plank walls has increased from 14.8 percent to 22.8 percent. This is a temporary arrangement, and the planks are usually replaced with wattle and daub, so the increase may simply reflect new construction. The percentage of houses having sweatbaths has declined from 52.1 to 41.5. No new sweatbaths have been made for the last ten years or so, and many of those recorded are not in use.

The changes in housing type reflect the greater prosperity of the town as well as the increasing receptivity to outside influence. The increase in tile roofs means a greater dependency on external markets. Ten years before the final census, a man who put on a tile roof feared the consequences of witchcraft.

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of witchcraft. Today probably 95 percent of the new roofs are made of tile. Often the old roofs cannot be replaced with tile because the rafters were not built to support them. One result of the change has been the dependence on a carpenter to construct the gables, since they have to be lined up more accurately than they do with thatch or palm roofs.

House lots in the town center are preferred to those on the margins. As residents of house sites on the ejido lands at the margins of the town acquire wealth, one of the first things they try to do is acquire a house closer to the plaza. These lots are smaller, averaging about 500 square meters, while those farther out average 900 square meters. In a sample measurement of 100 house lots, the size ranged from 180 to 1,440 square meters, and the average size was 77 square meters. Considering the advantages of a large lot in growing chile fruits and corn, the preference for smaller central lots reveals the strong prestige factor influencing choice.

House furnishings include both purchased and homemade items. Sleeping accommodations consist of wooden bedboards, either nailed on a frame or simply laid on blocks and covered with a straw mat. Woolen blankets from Comitán are sold locally at a price of 24 pesos or for 20 pesos in San Cristóbal and 18 pesos in Comitán. Most households own two or three wooden benches which line the walls of the porch and are made locally. Small chairs are purchased from Chamula carpenters at a cost of 2 to 4 pesos, as well as a small table costing about 4. A higher table is provided for the saints' pictures and candle holders, incense burner, and flower vases or tin cans. Hooks are fashioned from the crotch of trees and suspended on the house posts. Wooden boxes are bought from Ladino carpenters in San Cristóbal at a cost of 10 to 20 pesos depending on size and workmanship and are used to store clothing. In addition to the homemade water holders, water carriers, comales, strainers, and bowls, handmade glazed ware from San Cristóbal, factory-made porcelain dishes, metal cooking pots, knives, and spoons are purchased. Gourds provide serving ware for ceremonial occasions. Stone grinding platforms and rollers are purchased in San Cristóbal for about 10 pesos. Two new items have become increasingly popular in the past five years: a metal grinding machine for corn, hand operated and costing from 40 to 60 pesos depending on the size and quality, and a hinged press for tortillas, costing 15 pesos if made

602 Kinship is one of several bases for recruiting reciprocal or cooperative
 476 labor. Table 19 compares kinship with nonkinship-defined work groups
 626 in terms of the kinds of exchanges, the type of work done, the time span
 permitted for reciprocity, and the sanctions against failure to reciprocate.

TABLE 19. Labor Exchanges of Kinship- and Nonkinship-Defined Groups

Conditions	Within household	Beyond household, within community With kin (ritual, compadre, affinal and consanguineal)	With nonkin
Interchange	"Cooperation"—reciprocity based on implicit understandings	Reciprocity—explicit, defined by traditional expectations	Reciprocity—explicit, often defined by contract as well as tradition
Sanctions	Authority of elder member, male in men's work group, female in women's work group	Authority of elders of bilaterally-extended kin group; Recourse to cabildo if no strong elder	Informal—fear of gossip of neighbors; formal—reliance on local judges and president or recourse to district courts
Time Span	Extended, indefinite	Extended, usually some defined limit on repeated tasks (harvest); no limit for non-repeated tasks (housebuilding)	Immediate return expected, or explicitly stated time allowance
Kind of Task	Pottery-making, milpa agriculture, care of cattle, preparation of food	Ploughing, cultivating, harvesting, firing pottery, housebuilding	Same.

593 Fathers and sons, or sons-in-laws may work together on family-owned
 476 property. Because all men can acquire ejido land after marriage, and since
 423 47 percent of the households claim to have only this land, the cooperative
 621 tie between fathers and sons is not based on inheritance. If they work well
 (606) together, they may continue to cooperate after the son has become independent.
 476 Father and sons, brothers and brothers-in-law are expected to
 342 cooperate with each other in building a house, rethatching a roof, and
 607 threshing wheat. In the case of house-building or maintenance, they must
 593 pay for a substitute if they are unable to fulfill the obligation.
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Family Authority and Community Control

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Compadres, or ritual kin, are the next most important pool from which to draw assistance. The same restrictions on exchanges between actual kin apply to those between ritual kin. The one task which is confined to brothers and not extended to compadres is that of house-building.

Relationships between members of the household are defined by daily work tasks, commensality, sharing a living space, and participation in the same ceremonial events. The same rules which govern behavior in the family are extended to the wider community. The extension of the terms elder brother and elder sister, father and mother, and younger sibling to all of the people in one's own side of the dual division implies a pattern of behavior similar to that of the family. The fundamental equation in social relations is age-respect-deference-prestige.

The bilaterally extended kinship group provides the pattern structuring relations throughout the community. It is a framework allowing wide choice in selecting individuals with whom ceremonial and work relations are contracted. Relative age has superseded generation and descent as the principle governing relationships of authority and respect from the nuclear family to the hierarchy or community officials. These patterns will be traced in other institutions in following chapters.

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Curing and Curers

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from the spring and a live black chicken which draws the heat from the patient, taking it into its own body. The branches are dipped in a mixture of raw cocoa, pieces of melon mixed in water, and other "cold" items. A new set of clothing, smoked over an incense burner in which pitch pine is burned, is put on the patient. A common meal of chicken or beef stew is served with tortillas to all the guests. 755

In the case of more persistent illnesses, the bathing may take place at the springs. Male patients go to the large spring of San Nicolás and female patients to Pahaltón. A curing arch is erected near the spring. The curer [776] calls upon the spirit of the spring to perform a miracle. Some members of the family stay behind at the house so that if the spirit of the patient should return before he does, it will be welcomed. The people waiting in the house, called maliwanchetik, must drink as much liquor as do those at the spring. [273]

Sometimes the soul of a child is called at the place where fear caused it to be lost. The cure is started at the house, and then part of the group goes to the place which the curer has designated as the location of the fright. Soil is gathered in a kerchief or item of the patient's clothing and is placed at the head of his bed. As the group returns to the house, one of the child's relatives plays the guitar at the gate, and the curer sweeps a path for the soul with branches he has taken from the spring. Inside the house, the soul is again called while the curer brushes the child with spring branches. The mother embraces the child as incense is smoked over him and all his clothing. The child is then pulsed to determine whether the soul has returned.

Medicating the house. The strategy of medicating the house is tied to an understanding of the interaction of the spirit of the house and those of the inmates. When the evil sent out by the witch enters the house, it first asks permission of the house posts to enter the soil of the house. The house is adorned with pine branches and flowers to make the house-soul happy. Old men make palm crosses for the center post and corner posts of the yard. One large 50-cent candle is lit at the center post with small 20-cent candles on each side. When these candles are lighted they "blind the eye of evil spirits who can see only in the dark." A black chicken is buried alive in the square hole where the offering of the sheep 755
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- 755 has been made at the time of the house inauguration. Food for the chick-
 776 en—bread, chocolate, tortilla, and liquor—is put in the hole so it will stay
 • 342 alive for eight days.

The logic of the meal is that the house needs nourishment and for this reason has been fighting with the inmates and causing their illness. After the guests have been fed, the curer marks a cross with a mixture of garlic, creosote, seeds of mustard, and a "hot" herb called pol'zan, on the center post inside the house and on the corner posts. Like the candles, the cross serves to "blind the eye" of the evil spirits so that they will not reenter the house and talk the spirit of the house into causing harm.

This ceremony replicates that of the house meal at the time of the inauguration. (Chapter 1). The music of the guitar and gourd rattle is intended to make both the soul of the house and the souls of the inmates content. Why the curing of the house is always done on Thursday, when "the holy earth is open," is not fully understood by the curers I have questioned; they say, "We have forgotten how to talk to the earth." Chamula curers are reputed to be able to talk to the earth, and consultations may be sought with them if the illness continues.

- 755 Prayer. The curers talk with the soul of the thirteen ancestors of
 776 the world,⁵ to the "spirits of the heaven and of the church," and to saints
 782 of neighboring towns, asking for a good cure. The following prayer is one
 [539] given by the oldest and most honored of the curers:

*Sacred earth, sacred world
 Thirteen holy world, holy flowers
 In the center of another holy world
 Look mother, its clay
 I am a child, its clay.
 Holy heaven, Jesus Christ
 Holy herbs give the spirit*

- [801] 5. The number 13 has significance in the Maya cosmology in the 13 levels of heaven (Thompson 1964:125). The 13 candles set before the curing arch symbolize the 13 holy worlds. The meal for the house spirit includes 13 cigarettes.

Chapter II

Ordering Behavior by Places

121 People act out roles in a space and time matrix that provides the cues for
554 appropriate behavior. Place is a means of patterning three structural dimensions of role: sex, age, and relative prestige. In societies characterized by multiplex relationships, Gluckman (1962:35-36n.) has emphasized the importance of the setting in establishing what role the individual is playing. One's selection of a particular role from the many possible relationships tying people together is supported by observation of official terms of address and reference in these settings. In Tzo'ontahal, the use of place as
554 a designation of role is even more specific since each person occupying a role is given a special place within the setting.

554 The social domains, or fields of activity where major systems of roles are
342 defined in Tzo'ontahal, include the house, the cabildo, the church, and
368 the school. Segmentary role relations are limited to the clinic, the corn-
519 grinding mill, and the store. The house has retained its importance as a ceremonial locus not only for life crisis rituals but also for initiating new officials into the civil and religious hierarchies. The institutional buildings
[361] grouped around the plaza—the church, the cabildo, the schoolhouse, the clinic, the mill, and the cooperative store—are the meeting ground for outside representatives of national or supra-local agents and townspeople. These provide the settings in which behavioral adjustments to internal changes and to external standards can be viewed.

THE CONCEPT OF SPACE

772 Relevant social space is conceived of as a square. The square shape of
361 houses, of the offering hole for the house sacrifice, of the corn field, and of the planting pattern for corn conforms to a notion of the world as a

Ordering Behavior by Places

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square. Although this conception is contradicted by knowledge learned in school, the two concepts are not brought into direct opposition. The town still defines the outer limit of most meaningful social relations, and most people are not forced by the circumstances of their lives to deal with an understanding of the world as round. It is enough that the four "sides" of their village be protected by crosses at the points of entry. The important orientation points are the east, referred to as the "coming out of the sun," and the west, referred to as "the sleeping place of the sun." North and south are referred to as lowland and highland because of the topography. Compass orientation is important behaviorally only at death. The body of the deceased is laid out in the cemetery with the head to the east. Indians comment that the Ladinos lay the body out with the head to the west, but Indians of other towns, such as Zinacantan, also do so. The cemetery is located on the western side of the town.

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THE HOUSE

The reference to the house in prayer as "the entry to suffering, inside the poverty" suggests the "cult of poverty" which Wolf (1955:459) points out as characteristic of closed corporate Indian communities. Most people conform to a standard house size of five square meters subdivided into an interior sleeping and living area and a porch (Fig. 8). The walls are made of mud strengthened with lime packed in a framework of poles supported on nine main posts. The roofs are pitched with four sheds rising steeply to a truncated ridge. Tiles are used in most new houses to cover the roof, but there are still many thatched palm or wooden shingle roofs. Corn and beans are stored in the rafters under the eaves of the house.

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Inside the house, beds line the two side walls. If there is no cooking shack separate from the house, the hearth is placed in the center of the interior room. The grinding stone, raised on three posts, is placed to the left of the center post.

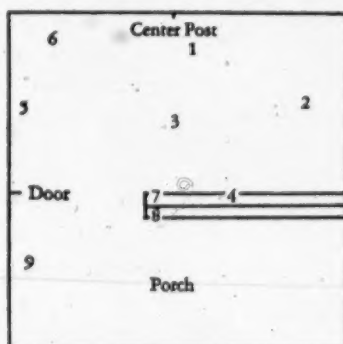
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The porch is the area for ceremonial gatherings and for making and storing pottery. A table with the pictures of household saints set against the inside wall, is adorned with flowers and candles. During house fiestas, men sit on the benches lining the four walls of the porch, while the women sit inside in a semicircle.

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- 342 women sit inside in a semicircle. A house without a closed-in porch is referred to as a "cattle house" since it is considered inadequate for entertaining guests at ceremonial affairs. Townspeople prefer to choose as higher officials those who have houses with porches to accommodate visitors.

Fig. 8. Interior of a House



1. Seat of honor for women
2. Bed area for women of house
3. Hearth
4. Bench area for relatives of house
5. Bench area for visiting men
6. Mats or wooden board for visiting women
7. Honor seat for men (when inside house)
8. Honor seat for men outside house
9. Resting areas for male helpers

592 Each member of the household has his place for sleeping, eating, and sitting. The youngest child sleeps with his parents, and older children sleep with siblings of the same sex or with their grandparents. Newly married couples living with their parents prefer to sleep in the cook shack if there is a separate structure. At mealtime, men and boys sit on small wooden chairs at a miniature table placed against the wall separating the interior from the porch, while women and girls kneel on straw mats near the hearth.

342 Reference points inside the house (Fig. 8) are the center post where the

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Ordering Behavior by Places

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meal for the house is buried in the inauguration ceremony (Chapter 1) and the door. Left and right are orientation points viewed from inside facing the door. Women of the house sit on mats near the center post. Female visitors occupy the mats to the left of the post and male visitors sit on benches lining the right wall and the interior wall. If it is a large ceremony for the ritual of inauguration or a celebration by the captain of a fiesta, only women enter the house, and the men sit on borrowed benches lining the walls of the porch.

Relative age is indicated by position in the seating arrangement. For women the seat of honor, occupied by the oldest woman present, is at the center post; other women of the household sit on a straw mat or board in order of descending age clockwise around the room. This order is modified by the presence of the grandmother who, if not a woman speaker, retires to the left (facing door from inside) corner. Visiting women sit to the right of the center post with the oldest immediately next to the post and those decreasing in age and stature to her right. For men, the seat on the bench nearest the door to the interior is called the "head of the bench"; this is the seat of the leading nakawane. The rest of the nakawanehetik sit along this bench in order of age. On the bench facing them sits the house owner, with his brothers and other visitors to his right in an age-ranked order. The b'alnialetik sit on the right wall bench.

Since prestigious roles are usually a concomitant of age, especially in the house ceremonies, there is seldom conflict between age and role status. When conflict does occur, it is only seen at the top level; thus, the grandmother if not active because of age, retires to the corner while the woman speaker, who must order the women in the kitchen and receive visiting dignitaries, takes over this position. I have seen the leader of the ð'om take precedence over the leader waiter who was older, because of the important role of the former.

When the family is carrying out a ritual, it is felt that the house should never be left vacant. The role of the "waiters" (maliwanehetik) is specifically that of remaining in the house while others of the celebrants are involved in ritual acts outside of the house. When the members of the betrothal party go to the girl's house, for example, the waiters are left behind; or when the patient leaves with the curer and some of the curing

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- 342 party to go to the spring, at least one relative remains in the house to
 796 greet the soul if it should precede the curing party.
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[755] Behavior in household rituals is described in Chapters 1, 5, and 8.

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THE CABILDO

344 The cabildo, called by the people of the town the "cold house,"¹ was
 796 built following the revolution of 1915, when Piñeda's revolutionary soldiers
 075 destroyed the original colonial structure. The tiles of the roof were confiscated from a finca which the Indians invaded in 1941 in an unsuccessful attempt to gain additional lands. When they were unable to maintain their hold on the land, they burned the owner's house and took the tiles to the town center where they remain as a symbol of their defiant action. They refer to this event with pride. The cabildo houses the jail, equipped with a barred wooden door, in one of its wings, and the Ejido Commission office in the other.

344 Within the cabildo, each official has his established place. The cabildo is
 352 furnished with a table at which the president and síndico sit on wooden
 621 chairs made in the Indian town of Chamula. Four benches lining the
 554 walls on either side of the entry provide seating for the civil officials. On
 576 the right side (looking out at the plaza) sit the judges in order of rank;
 [693] the regidores, in similar sequence follow them. The principales, and formerly the alfereses, sit on the left side when they appear for ceremonial occasions. This spatial allocation establishes drinking and greeting order as well. Visitors can go directly from one to another in the formal greeting of a handclasp and murmured "good morning, father," or "good afternoon, father," without violating age-respect patterns.

344 During court cases, the claimant and his supporters sit on the bench to
 352 the left of the door; on other occasions the bench is occupied by visitors or
 695 petitioners. The police sit on one of the two benches lining the outside
 [625] wall, or retire to the kitchen, a wooden slat lean-to on the left wing of the

[17] 1. Bunzel (1952) notes that in prayers, the cabildo in Chicicastenango is referred to as "the cold house, the icy house." Although the Quiché term is not given in her manuscript, one can see a similarity in the rhyming couplets and metaphorical allusions in the prayers of the towns.

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571 When the people in two adjacent sitios have close social
ties, they open an interior gate in the common fence, connecting
the two yards. June Nash has noticed that if any disagreement
[578] occurs between the people residing in the two contiguous sitios,
the interior gates are barricaded even more strongly than the
remainder of the fence, symbolically severing social communication
(Nash, J: 1959).

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[343] Inside the sitios, there are several areas of activity
[342] (see Fig. 10): the front yard (ti?naje) where animals are tied
when brought to the sitio, where corn is put to dry, etc., and
where there are buildings (hna) such as the cook-house and others
[241] which serve as sleeping quarters. The back yard is the place
where things are stored and where a small garden is cultivated.
[415] There are other spots, such as the place for the water jugs, the
[252] place for washing the mixtamal (corn mesh used for making tortillas),
[343] the sweat bath, etc.

342 The buildings themselves are mainly wattle and daub with
thatch or palm roofs in the traditional Mayan pattern. There
is, nevertheless, some variation in the use of cane, shingles and
planks for walls, or tile roofs, which indicates a desire to imi-
tate ladino ways rather than the wealth of the household. The
houses have small porches which serve as "living room," places
for receiving visitors, grooming, cleaning corn, or enjoying the
twilight after a good day's work (see Figs. 10 and 11).

House Ritual

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592 The building of a new house is an important social event
[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 107]

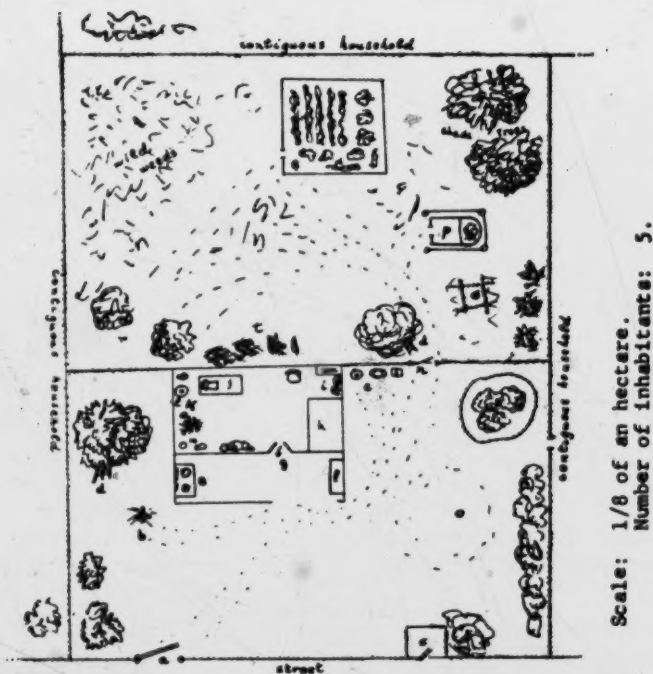


Fig. 10.--Model of a Standard Household

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| a--entrance gate | l--water pot inside the house |
| b--nixtamal washing-pot | m--little stools for seating |
| c--water pots | during meals and stored bags |
| d--chicken coop in a tree | n--gate to back yard |
| e--Saint's altar in the corridor | o--raised pig-pen |
| f--bench for receiving visitors | p--temascal (steam bath) |
| g--double door | q--garden with chillis, and |
| h--wooden bed | "tomatoes" |
| i--petates (mats) chest and chair | r--peach trees |
| j--table for making tortillas | s--pig-pen with gate to the street |
| (with the grinding stone or | t--fire-wood drying |
| metate) | |
| k--molino and fire place | |

8: Hunt E-4,5 (1958)1962

NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango
Aguacatenango

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Fig. 11.--House Viewed from the Street Gate

- 342 which usually indicates the emergence of a new domestic group.
592 Its social importance is related to several factors.

342 When the young couple build their first separate house,
591 this symbolizes their right to become a separate domestic group.
592 It means that they have lived together long enough to raise one
or more children past the age of weaning, and that they have
become economically and jurally independent of their parents.

342 (See later discussion on residence.) The building itself is a
156 material display of a man's good social relations. Although
591 house size does not correlate with the number of people living in
it, the villagers think that a house "talks" about its owners. A
very small house tells the villagers that it is a "drunk-man
house" because his owner spends all his money on liquor and can-
not buy materials for building a better place. The house also
tells of the amount of industrious effort that a man and his fam-
ily are able to put into its construction, and it tells about how
much his relatives and neighbors are willing to "loan hands" to
him (help for house building is not paid for in money, but in
reciprocal labor). A house is also a good indicator of how much
[177] "ladino influence" its owner has assimilated. Houses with
ladino influence would have internal divisions in the rooms,
windows, painted walls and/or tile roofs. (This type of house is
not common, as can be seen in Fig. 12 and Table 5.)

342 The building of a house is followed by a "house warming"
[527] ceremony, in which offerings to the Mother-Earth or Saintly Earth
[182] and the house are buried under the floor. The ritual preparation
of a new home is part of a complex ideological identification
between people and their homestead.

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 111]

8: Hunt E-4,5 (1958)1962

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• 342
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	Number -	Per Cent
Walls made of mud	93-77	
wood planks (<u>tejananil</u>)	11-9	
palm	9-7	
mud and wood	3-2.5	
cane and palm	1-1.1	
cane	2-2.3	
mud and palm	1-1.1	

Steam bath--20.

Of 121 buildings, 25 were painted white.

Building with corridor	65-80
Building without corridor	16-20
Kitchen with corridor	7-23
Kitchen without corridor	24-77

Households with more than two buildings distributed as follows: 15-22

unfinished new houses	4
granaries	6
saint's houses	2
storage room for pots	1
bedroom	1
empty	1

Roofs made of material other than palm (tile)--4

Pig pens--in all houses in sample

Chicken coops--46

Forty-five per cent of households have the kitchen built separate from the main building

Fig. 12.--House types in Aguacatenango

8: Hunt E-4,5 (1958)1962 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
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TABLE 5

HOUSE TYPES IN AMATENANGO^a

Type	Cases	Per Cent
<u>Roof</u>		
Tile	1	1
Shingle	28	24
Thatch	87	75
<u>Wall</u>		
Wattle-and-daub	97	84
Rough Boards	19	16

^aAfter Nash, J.: 1959.

Houses are a part of the family. They are considered as being alive (they grow old, just as people do) and watching the behavior of humans, toward whom they are somewhat unfriendly. If they are displeased with the behavior of the inhabitants, they can bring nightmares to the adults, death to the children and other misfortunes. Calixta Guiteras-Holmes (1960) has suggested that houses are ideologically connected with the earth, whom one has to please if crops are going to grow steadily, and to the monte (forested hills), where the wood for its construction is gathered.

Thus, because the monte is the residence of the evil spirits, enemies of mankind, the house is a projection of this malevolent world.

Even more significant is the house ritual connected with the sickness of a person who lives in it. It is significant

342 because sickness is considered a supernatural expression of dis-
753 turbed social relations, and this is considered disruptive, not
571 only for the people who inhabit a single dwelling, but also for
578 the building which symbolizes their common residence and interests.
As long as the relations of people living in a house are harmonious,
the house is kept contented. But if this is not so, both the people
and the building have to be ritually cleaned. For example, if a
daughter disobeys her mother, she is considered to be suffering
from bilis or cólico, and in need of curing. During the curing
ceremony, the sick misbehavior has to be instructed about her
duties as a good daughter, and is given a speech apropos the mis-
demeanor. The curing ceremony is not completed if the house is
not ritually cured, too. This is done by a curer offering the
building some trago, the local brew, asking it to be contented.
This offering is then symbolic of both the re-establishment of
normal social relations between the individuals living in the
house, and between the individuals and their material projection,
their house.

592 The people living in a household are in charge of per-
778 forming some other rituals which are expected to insure the wel-
fare of the whole group.

A small altar, usually made of a pine table, is kept in
the house. It is covered with Catholic Saints' images and printed
religious calendars. The table also contains all kinds of other
things: petty cash (which is kept there for small purchases),
double corncobs (which are "lucky pieces") or unusually colored
maize, and any other oddity found by the household members, such

8: Hunt E-4,5 (1958)1962

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778 as archeological pieces ("things of the people of before"). This altar is usually located in the house corridor. The altar is cleaned regularly and adorned with flowers by the women, and a candle or two is lighted on propitious days of the week, or to ask the house Saints for protection against witchcraft.

592
778 On the first of November, "day of all the dead" according
769 to the Catholic calendar, a ceremonial offering of food to the
342 spirits of the deceased is placed on this altar. It is in memory of the spirits who lived in the house in the immediate past, and who are supposed to come to enjoy the food and the fact that they are being remembered by the household. The ritual is performed only for the immediate generations. It is not the worshipping of one's ancestors, for it is for people who are not necessarily related by kinship, but for those who resided in the house. (Second wives, for example, are expected to offer food to the deceased first wife of their husbands if they lived in the same dwelling.)

592
769 Afterwards, the food is distributed among the living
769 relatives, compadres and neighbors, and all members of the household go to the cemetery.

[794] At the cemetery, the tombs are cleaned, repaired, adorned with marigolds, fruit and other food, and the family pays for the performance of a responso, funeral oration, read by a part-time specialist in such matters.

592
769 If these rituals are not performed, the dead come back to
342 their life stage, the house, and wander aimlessly among the living, scaring people, giving them bad dreams, or taking the lives of children.